Good-Natured Bear.

How He Told His Story; His Childhood; His Mother and Father; His Trying Experiences.

BY
R. Hengist Horne
AUTHOR OF
"ORION," &c.

CHAPTER VI.

Continuation of Mr. Bear's Story.

The next evening about dusk all the children who had been visiting Nancy and Valentine came again in a troop, scrambling and crowding at the door to get in first. They were so anxious to hear the remainder of the Bear's story. As they all came pell-mell into the room, they cried out: "Is he come?—when will he come?"

Dr. Littlepump walked up and down the room with an air of serious anxiety; calm to all appearance, yet evidently with much upon his mind. Mrs. Littlepump also expressed more than once a hope that no accident might happen on the road to prevent the arrival of Mr. Bear. Gretchen now became very anxious and fidgety, and looked at Uncle Abraham, as though she was a little vexed at his indifference about the event in which everybody else took so much interest.

Dorothea and Lydia, and Wallis all said they, for their parts, had been unable to sleep all last night for thinking of the stout gentleman's story. But nothing of all this seemed to move the Professor of Mathematics, who sat smoking his Dutch pipe, and twinkling his eyes, as if he was too much amused with his own thoughts to care about anything else. Presently, however, the clock struck five, and he rose from his chair, saying he must go and make a little visit a few doors off before he went to bed. They all begged him very hard to stay and see Mr. Bear, but he shook his head and said, "Pooh!" and walked away. Gretchen looked so pleased when he was gone, but the children said it was very naughty of dear Uncle Abraham not to stay.

Gretchen now proposed a game to amuse them till Mr. Bear arrived. This was agreed upon, and they began; but they did not attend to it; their minds were too much occupied with expectation. Mrs. Littlepump then proposed a dance. This answered much better. Mrs. Littlepump played upon the pianoforte, and was accompanied on the flute by the Doctor, whose attitudes in performing on that elegant instrument had always been considered well worth seeing. In a short time, however, the children stopped and would dance no more, and went to their seats and sat silently, and everybody became dreadfully dull. Two little boys were very cross; one of them bit his own thumb, to find an excuse for crying, and the other gave the leg of the table a kick, and called it a "naughty table."

"Oh!" cried little Val. "I do hope the Gentleman Bear will be sure to come!"

As he said this, they very plainly heard the sound of a horse's hoof coming up the street, and all ran to the windows. What was their surprise and delight to see that it was the Bear on horseback!

He rode with rather a round back, and his stirrups very short, but in other respects he sat well, like a portly gentleman on a journey, and held the reins with a great air of consequence. His method of dismounting, however, was not graceful. As the horse stopped before Dr. Littlepump's door, the stout gentleman in the rough coat bent forward, and threw his arms with a good hug around the horse's neck, and so let himself slowly down, hanging carefully till his fur boots touched the ground. At this all the children burst out laughing; but instantly recollecting themselves, they ran away from the windows, and scrambled into seats around the stove, coughing a little to pretend it had been only that. And now a knock was heard at the door, and a loud ring! Gretchen ran and opened the door, and in came the Bear.

Everybody was so glad to see him. Wallis and Gretchen helped him to take off his cloak and comforter; Mrs. Littlepump begged him to take a seat near the stove; Dorothea presented him with a large cup of nice coffee, hot and strong, and very sweet; and Dr. Littlepump with a dignified and most courtly air, handed him Uncle Abraham's pipe—at least he thought he had done so, but in the confusion of the moment, he handed him his own flute instead, without observing what he had done. The Bear received it with a bow, and was so polite that he would not notice the mistake, but pretended to smoke the flute till it was exchanged for the pipe by Mrs. Littlepump, with a thousand apologies for the Doctor's absence of mind.

Everybody being now comfortably settled, the Bear rose from his chair, and bowing all round, looked at Dr. Littlepump and said:

"Mr. Dr. Littlepump, let me know what is the wish of your friends here."

"Oh, Mr. Good-natured Bear!" cried Nancy, unable to contain herself, "do pray continue your delightful story!"

The Bear laid one paw upon his heart, bowed, sat down, and after looking thoughtfully into the bowl of his pipe for a few minutes, as if to collect his ideas, thus proceeded:

"At the foot of our cave there was, as I have informed you, a plot of high green grass with a path through it up to the entrance; and at the back of the rock, in which our cave was, there grew several fine old oak trees, together with a great number of young elms, all promising to become very tall and beautiful. My father was very fond of walking alone among those trees, where he often meditated with his head on one side for hours together, sometimes leaning one shoulder against an oak trunk, and sometimes resting his nose upon a knot in the wood, and occasionally scratching his ear with it. He thought he was thinking. But my father's chief merit was in his honest, ardent, earnest, and determined character; in intellect he was not equal to my mother.

"One afternoon my father was taking a nap on our bed of leaves in the cave, when he was aroused by a noise at the back of the rock, among the trees. The sound was that of a succession of hard blows. My father went to see what it was, and there he saw a woodman with an axe cutting down the young elms. My father ran towards him in a perfect rage, and the man instantly scampered away as fast as he could, crying, "Oh! Oh! Oh!"

"The next morning, as soon as it was light, the same noise was heard again among the trees. Up jumped my father; but my mother, fearing some danger, went with him, and it was fortunate she did, as the woodman had brought his two sons with loaded guns to watch for my father while the woodman was at work. My mother saw two youths hiding each behind a large tree, and she persuaded my father, both for her sake and mine, to come away, which he at last did, though not without much gruffness and grumbling indignation.

"By the evening, the woodman had cut down a third part of the young elms, and went away, intending to come and carry them off in the morning. My mother tried to persuade my father not to interfere, because it was too near our house. But my father refused to see the danger to our home, and declared that the nearness of the trees to our cave was the very reason why he could not endure the thought of their being cut down. They were his trees, and he could not bear to lose them. So at night he went and collected all the trees that were cut down and carried them in his arms, one or two at a time, according to their size—to a river at a short distance, where the current was strong, and threw them in with a great splash. Long before morning the current had carried them all far away.

"The next day the woodman came with his two sons, and a team of horses and ropes, to drag the trees away. But there was not one to be seen! After wondering, and sitting under an oak, and looking very stupid for an hour, the woodman again went to work with his axe, sending one son back with the horses, as they were wanted for the plough.

"In the evening the woodman went away as before, leaving the trees and thinking no one would steal them a second time. But at night my father went as before, and threw them all in the current. In the morning, the woodman came again with the team. 'What!' cried he, 'all gone again!—it must be the work of some fairy—thieves could never carry away clean out of sight all those heavy young trees—unless indeed it was the Forty Thieves, for it would need as many.'

"Again the woodman cut down the young elms. And at the worst, we could find another cave with oaks near it.'

"'But not with oaks and a nice river too!' exclaimed my father.

"'Then,' said my mother, 'I and the child' (meaning me) 'must go with you, and help to do it as quick as possible; and after it is done, we will go and sleep for a few nights in the forest over the northern hills, for my mind is very uneasy about matters.'

"My father laughed and said, 'Goof-zugdt,' which, in the Bear language of Poland signifies, Nonsense!

"Accordingly we all went and worked away at a great rate, my father and mother carrying the largest of the great trees, and I such of the smallest as my tender years would allow. By midnight we had just finished, and my father was carrying the last tree, when suddenly a shout was heard, and we saw a flash of torches! The trees had been seen floating down the stream by some men who who were coming to watch for the thieves, or to see if it was the work of fairies.

"'Cross the stream higher up,' said my mother, 'and make for the northern hills!' saying which she seized me by one ear in her mouth and lugged me along till we came to the banks, and instantly soused me into the water. As I sunk I gave myself up for lost, though I was sure my mother knew what was best for me. When I came to the surface, however, thinking it was some other life I instantly felt my ear again in my mother's warm mouth, and we soon landed on. My father was not with us; we took it for granted he had run in some other direction, probably to confuse the pursuers, and would rejoin us shortly.

"The shouts, however, followed us, and so did the men with the torches. My mother never looked behind, but ran lugging me along by one ear, through fields and woods, up hills and down dale, till I lost my senses one after the other, and as the last sense was going—which was the sense of feeling or touch—I believed it was death, and tried to say: 'Good-bye, mother! let go my ear, and save yourself!' but as I tried to say so, I fainted away.

"When I came to myself, I was lying among some warm leaves under thick bushes. But my father had not joined us. We never saw my poor father more.

"I mentioned that when the woodman, and the villagers whom he had collected, had first surprised us, my father was in the act of carrying the last tree away; and such was his earnest devotion to one idea at a time, and such his obstinacy of character, that he actually would not throw away the heavy tree he was carrying, but ran with it, even when the pursuers were close behind him, till arriving at the bank, he threw it in, and then endeavored to save himself by swimming across, in order to follow us. But it was too late. They threw ropes over while he was in the water and half drowned my poor father, so that when at last he was landed on the other side, he was unable to make the great, the prodigious resistance he had so much relied upon. He was taken prisoner and carried bound hand and foot into the village, amidst the blaze of torches, the shouts of men, the barking of dogs, and the cries of wonder and curiosity of the women and children, who jumped out of bed to see him pass. Several children ran into the streets in their night-caps and night-gowns, and cried out:

"'Look at the bear, who stole the trees,
And pitched them into the wa—ter!'"

My father ran after him in a perfect rage.

The Bear and the Children.

In the parlor of an inn in a small town sat a man who had been going about with a bear. He was tied up in the yards. Up in the attic three little children were playing together. The eldest was just six years old, the youngest was only two.

Stump! stump! stump! Some one was coming up the stairs. The door flew open suddenly, and there stood the great, shaggy bear. He had got tired of waiting, and found his way to the stairs. The children were badly frightened. Each crept into a corner, but the bear found them out, and smelt their clothes, but he did not hurt them. "This must be a great dog," they said, and they began pat him. Then the bear lay down on the floor and the youngest boy climbed on his back, and hid his head in his shaggy fur, and played hide and seek. The eldest boy took his drum and began to strike it, when the bear arose on his hind legs and danced. At that the children gave a merry shout. The two younger boys took their wooden guns and gave the bear one. Away they all marched around the room keeping step. Now the frightened mother of the children came to the door. But the youngest boy shouted joyfully, "See, we are playing soldiers. Then the bear's master came running up and took the bear away.

How Bessie Saved Her Dolls.

Some years ago the city of Key West was all in flames. The people were in a panic; they felt that the whole city would be burned. Among the men, women and children that crowded the sidewalks and ran to and fro, trying in vain to save their property and goods, was little Bessie Harris the daughter of Dr. Harris. All at once she heard a man say that the money and valuables in the Bank of Key West were being sent on board the revenue steamer Dixie for safety. She hurried home and gathered in her arms two wax dolls, with their clothes, and then she ran through the streets all alone, through the blinding smoke and the flying cinders, until she reached the wharf at the lighthouse, where the steamer Dix was moored. Bessie hurried on board the boat and into the cabin of the captain. She laid the dolls in the lap of the astonished man and threw her arms about his neck and begged him to save her darlings. The captain kissed her and made her a faithful promise. Then he sent a big, strong sailor to take the little girl back to her home. Those two dolls occupied the post of honor on the steamer Dix, surrounded by government bonds and bank notes and bags of gold. But none of the valuables were more precious than Bessie's dolls.

NANNIE LEE BRISTOW.
December 8, 1903.

Dorothy's Christmas Letter.

"O, mamma, where is my doll?" It was spoken by a little girl ten years old. She had light, curly hair and blue eyes.

"I do not know, darling," answered her mother.

"All right, I will hunt for her," replied Dorothy, for that was her name.

Meanwhile Dorothy is hunting for her doll, we will describe her and her home. Dorothy's father was a rich man, and she had a lot of nice things.

One day she was looking out of the window and it began snowing, and she said to her mother: "O, mamma, it's snowing," and she was so glad she jumped up and down. Suddenly her face clouded and she said: "Mother, I am sorry for the poor people who haven't any wood, aren't you?"

"Yes, my dear, I am very sorry; but God knows best."

"Mamma," said Dorothy, "I think I will write to Santa Claus and ask him to send the poor children something for Christmas." So she got her pencil and paper and wrote as follows:

No. 165 Broadway, New York.

Dear Santa Claus:

I am writing this letter to ask you to bring the poor children some stockings and shoes; also some nuts, candy and toys; and don't forget me.

Your loving friend,
DOROTHY DIX.

She posted her letter; then went home. Christmas morning dawned bright and clear. Dorothy was up and dressed before any one else in the house. After breakfast her mother called her into the parlor, and what do you think she saw?

ON THE ANXIOUS CHAIR.
By Marion Joynes.

A large holly tree, with red berries, and on this tree were apples, oranges and all kinds of toys; long strings of popcorn, and a great many candles. And on a card, in red and green letters, were the words:

To the poor children of the city
and their little friend,
Dorothy Dix.

Dorothy clapped her hands in glee and ran to get her cloak and hat to tell the children, and that evening a large crowd of them were gathered around the tree at 9 o'clock. Mrs. Dix gave each of the children a square of pink ice cream, with these words on it: "Merry Christmas to all and to all a good-night." They all had a nice time, and that night Dorothy went to bed very happy because it is more blessed to give than to receive.

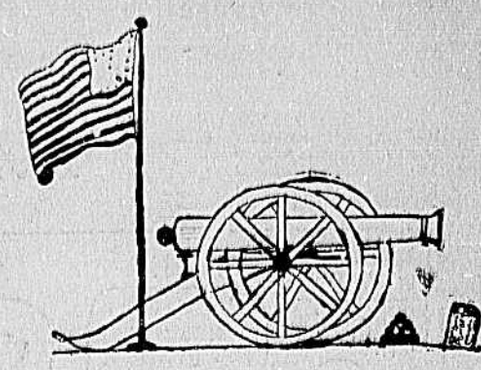
FRANCES T. ABERNETHY.

A Fox and a Rabbit.

Once there lived a fox and a rabbit close together. One lived under a root of a tree, and the other under a rock. And one day the fox became very hungry and wandered where he could catch something for his dinner, and at last he thought about his good old friend, rabbit, for which they had been friends so long. And he says to his self, I will go over to see my friend, Mrs. Rabbit, about my dinner, and he went to see her about his dinner, and she said I will tell you where you can get your dinner. It is not very far, right down here at the old farmer's barn lot. For I was hopping through there yesterday and I saw some fine chickens, but I never do want any, for I am not very fond of them. Ha, says the fox to the rabbit, we'll go right down there to-day. And then the fox asked the rabbit to go with him, for he didn't know where the place was. And the fox says I am very hungry, for it was so cold, I wouldn't go out of my den to get anything. And they went on down to the lot where the fox thought he would get his dinner. But just as the fox grabbed at a chicken, they all began to hollow, and got frightened at the old farmer's dogs that came running out. And about that time the old farmer came out himself. But the fox got frightened and ran back to his den and missed his fine chicken for his dinner, and the farmer saw the rabbit run across the lot and killed him dead. And the rabbit got killed for the fox's mean deed.

And every one that reads this piece must always think, and not be led off by straggling no count people. For if you do, you might get hurt or killed, in place of them.

BETTIE A. BRAGG.



BY EVERETT A. FAIRLAMB.
(Prize Drawing.

"My Visit to My Aunt's."

I went there last spring and left in August. The first morning after I got there I saw some hogs in the yard, I asked Aunt Mary if they were hers, she said No. She had a little dog named Juba, and I got him and ran the hogs along the creek, they jumped in and ran across to the other side, and I left them. They came back that evening. I called Juba and ran them again. A week or two after this father came and brought me an air rifle. After that I shot the hogs whenever I got a chance. Once two little pigs came in the yard, Juba and myself ran them under the corn crib, then down to the creek, where I met another boy, we ran the pigs in deep water; they could hardly get out. The other boy threw a piece of glass at them and cut a gash in the snout of one of them. As I was going to the house I heard a hen cackling and ran to her, the hen had her little chicks with her and a turkey buzzard was trying to take one of them, the hen was fighting him. I ran to the house, got my rifle, shot at him and scared him off. The next day I went fishing and saw something in the water that looked like a snake, but it was an eel. I got a hook and tried to catch him, he bit at it twice, the third time he got a good hold. I tried to pull him out, but could not, got Ben to help me land him. He was seventeen inches long. We gave him to the cat. Now I think I have told you enough for this time.

Your friend,
PENDLETON HUGHES.
Warsaw, N. C.

Which Is Best.

FIRST BOY.

"Of all the days of all the year,"
Cried loyal Freddy Bly,
"The very splendid-est of all
Comes early in July.
Think of the fun, the glorious noise!
That is the day—at least, for boys."

SECOND BOY.

"Of all the days of all the year,"
Said little Robin Gray,
"The very best, I do believe,
Will be Thanksgiving Day.
A fellow has such things to eat!
Thanksgiving Day cannot be beat!"

GIRL.

"Of all the days of all the year,"
Sang pretty Nan, "remember
the dearest, happiest and best
Is coming in December.
What girl or boy—north, east, south, west,
But knows that Christmas is the best!"

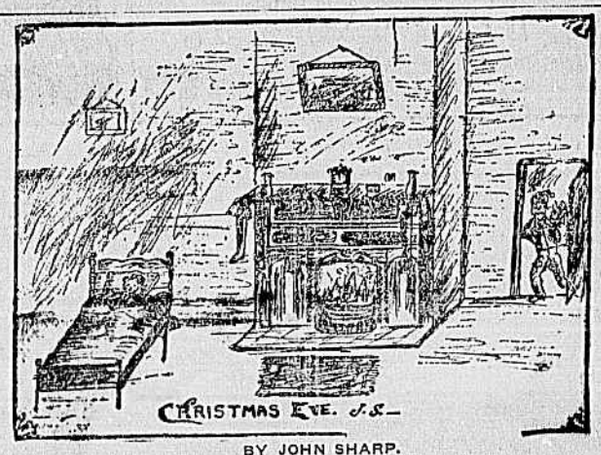
MILTON BRYANT.

Winter in the Mountains.

Mamma, Fred and I arrived in the Summit City on November 20, 1903. Papa met us at the depot and took us to his store to get warm. Then we went up a very steep hill to our own home. We found the weather very cold here. In a few days a heavy snow fell; we thought we were in Santa Claus' land. But the coasting has been fine. The children gather on a hill near our house and glide all day. Sometimes they join their sleds together and come down the hill like a train.

Christmas will soon be here, and I hope Santa Claus will not fail to come, though I fear he will need some extra reindeer to ascend our hills. We have holly and mistletoe growing here, so we will decorate for Christmas. Please send me a T. D. C. C. badge.

HELEN A. COFER.



CHRISTMAS EVE. J. S.—

BY JOHN SHARP.

For a Child's Plate.

My child, when from this plate you eat,
Give thanks to God, who sends you meat;
Beware you show no hate or greed,
To those who serve pay gentle heed;
Spare out some bread to feed the poor,
And you shall never want, be sure.

FOR HIS CUP.

When drinking, child, from out this cup
Think how the earth to God looks up
To thank Him for the rain.

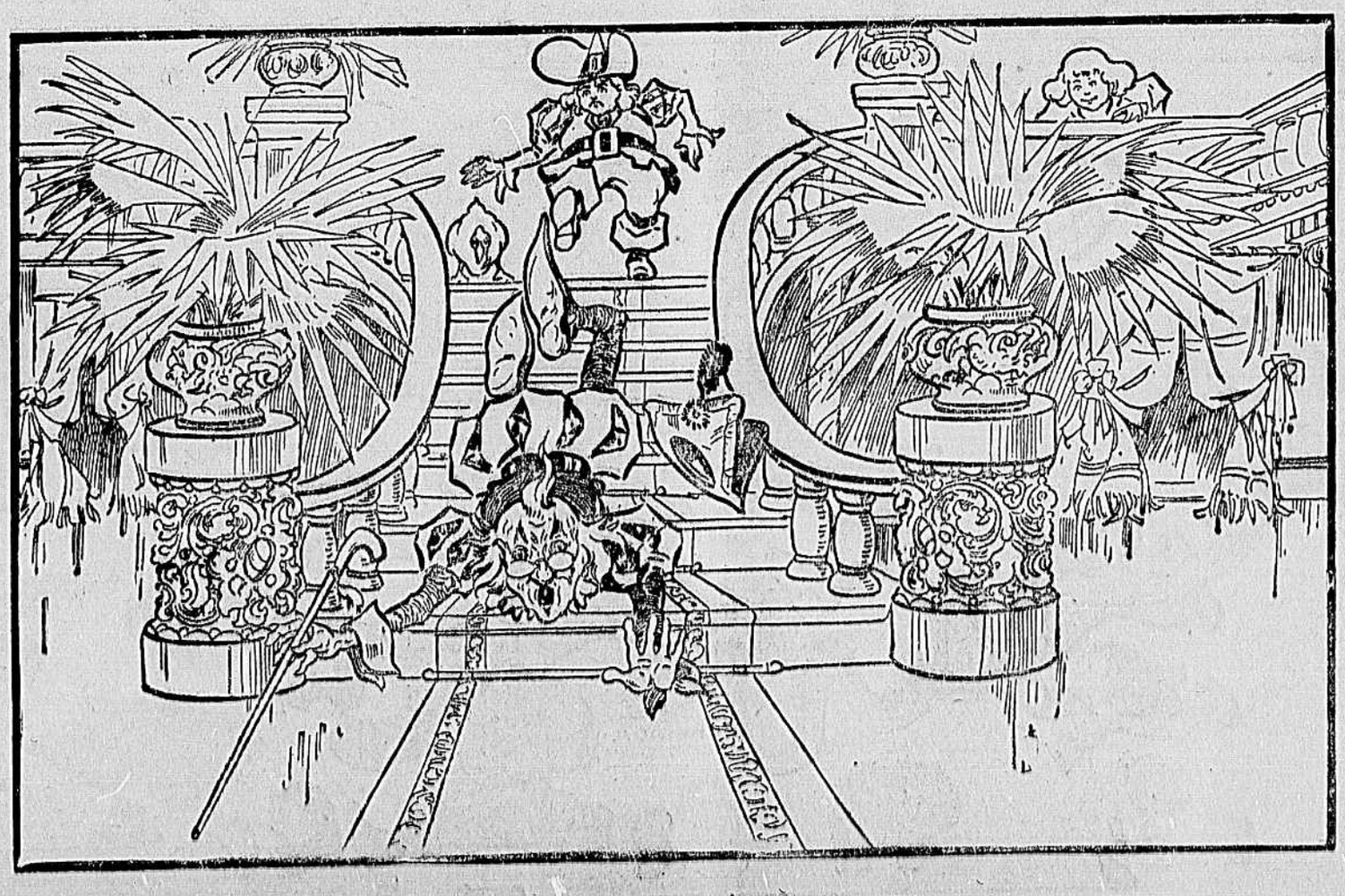
Selected by EDDIE T. HARLEY.

By WM. G. MAUPIN, of Portsmouth.
(Prize Drawing.)

A BUNCH OF HOLLY.
BY ALICE NELSON.

MOTHER GOOSE PAINT-BOOK CONTEST.

Cut this picture out and color neatly and artistically and send to The Times-Dispatch office by next Saturday. Mother Goose Paint Books will be mailed to the three children sending in the best colored pictures.



MY NAME IS.....

RESIDENCE .....

ADDRESS .....

Goosey, goosey-gander, whither shall I wander.
Upstairs, and downstairs, and in my lady's chamber.
There I met an old man, who would not say his prayers.
I took him by his left leg; and threw him down the stairs.